



Department of Employee Relations

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June 12, 2015

To the Honorable
The Committee on Finance and Personnel
Common Council
City of Milwaukee

Dear Committee Members: Re: Common Council File Number **150284**

Subject: Public Health Nurse Recruitment Rate

Summary

Over the last several years the Milwaukee Health Department has been struggling with their ability to attract and retain Public Health Nurses. They are competing with community based clinics, hospitals, and schools who recruit nurses with four year degrees at higher salaries and often offer signing bonuses. The high turnover rate and the on-going need to fill vacancies prompted a review of the relevant labor market. This review revealed that the pay level for Public Health Nurses is significantly below the local labor market. Public Health Nurse positions remain vacant and Nurses with several years of work experience are leaving for higher paid positions.

This report recommends changing the minimum of the Pay Range for Public Health Nurses from \$47,177 to \$53,044. This recommendation will immediately impact the department's ability to recruit within the labor market and will bring the rate of pay of 20 Public Health Nurses to a more competitive level. Additional changes will be recommended as part of a career ladder in development. This career ladder will recommend pay progression based upon job performance and the attainment of competencies. A work team of Health Department Managers and Public Health Nurses, in coordination with staff from Employee Relations, are currently developing the structure and components of this career ladder.

Action Required

In the Salary Ordinance, under Pay Range 2DN, delete footnote "11" and replace with:
"(11) Recruitment is at \$2,040.16 (\$53,044.16)."

Background

The Milwaukee Health Department Public Health Nurses (PHN) provide population-based and individual nursing activities in homes, schools, clinics and community settings designed to assure that health care is accessible and available to residents. The majority of the positions are dedicated to meeting the public health outcomes for the Family and Community Health and Disease Control and Environmental Health



Divisions within the MHD. Nursing programs addressing these outcomes include Empowering Families of Milwaukee, Nurse Family Partnership, Communicable and Infectious Disease, Home Environmental Health, Immunizations, Men's Health, STD/HIV, Tuberculosis Control Program and Milwaukee Breast Cervical Awareness Program. While some Public Health Nurses provide direct clinical services, such as immunizations, the main focus of all positions is to assess the needs of individuals within the context of a community setting by considering economic, social, political and environmental factors that frequently serve as resources and barriers to achieving and sustaining the public's health.

There are currently 8 vacancies for Public Health Nurses of a total of 50 authorized positions. Over the past three years, the City of Milwaukee Health Department has been faced with recruitment and retention problems amongst the public health nursing (PHN) staff. During this span of time a significant number of nurses have resigned or retired, often leaving a large number of vacancies for extended periods of time.

Many of the current PHN's are at varying stages of training and are therefore limited in the scope of their practice with the PHN role. This situation is affecting day to day operations of the Health department, its ability to effectively carryout essential duties with respect to the area of case management, immunization clinics, and the achievement of required objectives within this department's multiple grant-funded programs.

The City's Health Department appoints Public Health Nurses at a rate of \$47,177 to \$53,044 annually. By statute, Public Health Nurses are required to possess a bachelor's degree in nursing (BSN) and also have a license as a Registered Nurse. A salary survey conducted by the Department of Employee Relations shows that the City of Milwaukee has the lowest appointment rate for municipalities in southeastern Wisconsin.

Salary Survey – Public Health Nurses

June, 2015

Jurisdiction	Title	Pay Range Minimum	Pay Range Maximum	
City of Milwaukee	Public Health Nurse	\$47,177	\$59,498	Appointment rate \$47,177 - \$53,044
West Allis	Public Health Nurse I	\$54,704	\$61,068	
West Allis	Public Health Nurse II	\$55,806	\$64,043	
Waukesha County	Public Health Nurse	\$56,410	\$74,422	
City of Greenfield	Public Health Nurse	\$58,722	\$67,382	
Milwaukee Public Schools	School Nurse 10 mo. 200 days pr/yr	\$45,397	\$63,445	
Milwaukee Public Schools	School Nurse recalculated to 12 mo.	\$59,010	\$82,472	
State of Wisconsin	Public Health Nurse	\$46,365	\$90,183	Maximum appoint. rate is \$68,274
State of Wisconsin	Public Health Nurse- Advanced	\$52,584	\$101,073	Maximum appoint. rate is \$76,879
Actual State of Wisconsin salaries range from 46K to \$90K with an average salary of \$69,785.				

The current rates of pay have created difficulty for the Milwaukee Health Department in recruiting and retaining Public Health Nurses. Few Nurses are interested in working with the City of Milwaukee's Health Department and Nurses with several years of experience are leaving for higher paying jobs.

Some Public Health Nurses have left to take jobs with Milwaukee Public Schools as School Nurses. These jobs also require a BSN. The Milwaukee Public Schools pay \$45,397 to \$63,445 for a 10 month School Nurse. The maximum annual pay for a City of Milwaukee Public Health Nurse is \$59,498. This means that a 10-month School Nurse at MPS could earn more than a full-time Public Health Nurse with the Milwaukee Health Department. Anecdotally, the Health Department recently learned that a Public Health Nurse hired within the last year was leaving the department for a position with a \$15,000 increase in pay. Such turnover is costly in terms of training, recruiting, rehiring, and retraining.

Due to an aging population and other factors, the demand for Registered Nurses and BSN Nurses is very high. In recognition of this fact, Milwaukee County recently increased the pay level of its Registered Nurses by 5% at the minimum of the range and 17% at the maximum. Registered Nurses at Milwaukee County, (not required to possess a bachelor's degree) are now hired at \$53,061 and can earn a maximum of \$79,755 annually.


Recommendations

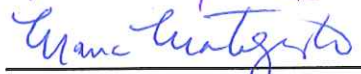
An immediate recommendation is to increase the appointment rate of Public Health Nurses to \$53,044 annually. This rate is the highest recruitment rate currently provided within a footnote for PHN in the Salary Ordinance. The cost of implementing this proposal is approximately \$91,403 over a 12-month period. If implemented Pay Period 14, the cost for 2015 will be approximately \$45,701.59.

The longer term recommendation is the implementation of a career ladder for Public Health Nurses that provides pay progression through the attainment of job related competencies and credentials combined with measures of job performance. Recommendations to create a career ladder would include recommendations of changes to the pay structure relative to the current labor market.

A collaborative effort involving Health Department Managers, Public Health Nurses, and the Department of Employee Relations is now underway for the creation of this career ladder. A proposal is projected for later in 2015.

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